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**The theses of the PhD dissertation entitled
‘Left Dislocation in Optimality Theory’**

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Budapest

2013

1. Introduction: the phenomenon and research aims

The aim of the present dissertation is to deliver an analysis of Left Dislocation based on pragmatic and syntactic factors in a restrictive optimality-theoretic framework, which does not assume hierarchical structure but linear ordering of input features.

A definition of Left Dislocation (LD) which stands closest to that of the present work can be found in Lambrecht (2001:1050):

„A dislocation construction [...] is a sentence structure in which a referential constituent which could function as an argument or adjunct within a predicate-argument structure occurs instead outside the boundaries of the clause containing the predicate. [...] The role of the denotatum of the dislocated constituent as an argument or adjunct of the predicate is represented within the clause by a pronominal element which is construed as coreferential with the dislocated phrase.”

Similarly, I will take LD as a detachment construction with an obligatory alternative intra-clausal position of the dislocated constituent signalled by a resumptive pronoun.

The following sentences exemplify the two main types of LD: Hanging Topic Left Dislocation, without case-matching between the dislocate and the *in situ* resumptive pronoun as in (1-2), and Contrastive Left Dislocation (3-4), with a fronted resumptive and a matching case-marked dislocated nominal item.

- (1) **Old Sandy Patterson**, ooh I want to see **him** now, I wonder if he's in today.
- (2) **Der Hans**, laut Maria wird **ihn** anscheinend keiner unterstützen.
 the_{NOM} H. according to M. will him_{ACC} apparently no one support
Hans, according to Mary no one will support him.
- (3) **Mit dem Hans**, **mit dem** spreche ich nicht mehr.
 with the_{DAT} Hans with that_{DAT} talk I not any longer
To Hans I don't talk any longer.
- (4) **A Péterrel**, **azzal** Mari szívesen elmenne kirándulni.
 the Peter-with it-with Mary_{NOM} with pleasure PFX-go_{cond} to go-excursion
Peter, Mary would gladly go on an excursion with him.

The phenomenon has attracted attention from the early generative times (Ross 1967), through the Government and Binding theory of the 1980s (Vat 1981) and extending into the present, in the Minimalist Framework (e.g. Grohmann 2003). Presumably, one of the reasons for this attention lies in the fact that LD seems to be hard to fit in a structure-based transformational framework for various reasons. Many previous analyses have sought answers to the question of

the status of the dislocated item: whether it is to be regarded as clause-internal or external; furthermore, concerning its origin, whether it has been base-generated in the initial position or movement has taken place from a clause-internal argument position. Moreover, mostly in Germanic languages, there is a possible variation in the form of the pronoun, as it may be realised by a personal pronoun or a demonstrative.

One of the aims of the present work is to show that the applied framework of Syntax First Alignment (SFA) is able to provide an alternative to structural approaches and can deliver answers to the above questions. By concentrating on a specific linguistic phenomenon from a contrastive perspective, the optimality theoretic system will also be developed and extended.

To provide a firm basis for the syntactic analysis, the formal characteristics of Left Dislocation are given a detailed discussion with the help of significant descriptive studies (Geluykens 1992, Altmann 1981, Kenesei et al. 1998, Molnár 1998) focussing on the three languages which will be in the centre of analysis, that is, English, German and Hungarian. New examples from actual usage will be presented, either in spoken or informal written style (e.g. comments from internet sites).

It will be argued that the appearance of the resumptive is not equivalent to the insertion of a non-input item, but is the spell-out of certain grammatical and discourse features that become separated from the left dislocated nominal expression. By losing some of its features, the fronted item is less tightly attached to the sentence as other clause members, which serves to explain its unique behaviour as opposed to other fronted items.

Pragmatically, the discourse function of LD is concluded to be the promotion of a new, unexpected topic. As newness is traditionally associated with the focus function, and topics tend to refer to familiar information, the co-occurrence of the newness and the topic feature causes a certain degree of tension that can only be resolved by creating an output form in which the two features are placed on distinct items. In other words, one of the items introduces the new referent (preferably the dislocated expression because of its referentiality), whereas the second one, i.e. the resumptive (RP), can be assigned topicality and refer back to the fronted expression. Topicality is assumed to be expressed by the aboutness feature [about] in the example, which will be argued to be the defining characteristic of topics cross-linguistically.

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|-----|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------|
| (4) | <i>Jon,</i> | I don't like | <i>him.</i> |
| | Root _i | | RP _i |
| | [new], <i>semantic information</i> | | [about], <i>grammatical information</i> |

2. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation has the following structure. After the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides a working definition of Left Dislocation and a brief overview of the structures which have been called as such in the literature. A foretaste of the analysis is also given before the description of the data. Due to the close connection of LD to topicalisation, it is necessary to treat both phenomena from a pragmatic perspective as well, following Geluykens (1992), Prince (1997, 1998), Givón (1983) and Frey (2005) among others, as this establishes the grounds for applying pragmatic features in the analysis. After describing the language specific properties of LD types, the syntactic literature will be overviewed (e.g. chapters of Anagnostopoulou et al. 1997, Grohmann 2003), with an eye on the difficulties that the accommodation of LD in the mainstream generative framework has caused.

Chapter 3 outlines the alignment-based optimality-theoretic framework adopted here: the Syntax First Alignment system of Newson (2010) and Newson and Szécsényi (2012). This operates with elements called ‘conceptual units’, or features, instead of actual words, similarly to the concepts of Distributed Morphology (Halle and Marantz 1994) and Nanosyntax (Starke 2009); the notion of domain is also presented to establish relationships among items which share some property determined by the input (e.g. the predicate domain, the temporal domain etc.). The types of possible constraints (precedence/subsequence, adjacency and faithfulness) and the effects of their combinations are also discussed. Following this, the theoretical issue of modelling argument structure is touched upon (based on Grimshaw 1990) and the language specific basic word orders are discussed to provide a foundation for the analysis of further structures. The role of the second-position effect is emphasised here. Furthermore, to be able to handle issues of nominal expressions, the grammatical and pragmatic features constituting nouns, pronouns and more complex nominal expressions will be laid down, relying on research conducted in Distributed Morphology.

Chapter 4 will focus on the detailed analysis of Topicalisation and Left Dislocation in the languages under discussion. I will argue for a more refined notion of topic for the syntax and represent different degrees of topicality by employing pragmatic features in the analysis. I claim that topicalisation and LD derive from similar inputs with differences only in the pragmatic features involved, which then result in different orderings of the features. The topic of the second part of the chapter is vocabulary insertion concerning the nature of the resumptive pronoun and the case of the dislocated item.

As the last step, I attempt to extend the analysis to a different type of LD found in *wh*-interrogatives, which I will call ‘*repair-strategy LD*’. My aim in Chapter 5 is twofold: first, to give an appropriate account of the basics of ‘*wh-movement*’ in the Syntax First Alignment framework, also taking ordering variations in multiple questions into consideration and the distinction between embedded and matrix interrogatives. Second, to demonstrate that the system can also derive another type of LD different from the pragmatic-based type, triggered by syntactic factors; or to be precise, the system can correctly choose between the surfacing of topicalisation or LD in a given syntactic environment. This analytical chapter sheds light on the possibility of the emergence of LD in a situation distinct from new topic introduction. It is argued that a simultaneous high ranking of the *wh*-precedence and topic-precedence constraints is able to trigger LD in *wh*-contexts, as both the [wh] feature and the [contrast] feature aim at preceding the domain of the predicate. Apart from deriving the appropriate *wh*-interrogatives, the system can correctly assess in which cases a topic marked bundle can surface as a syntactic topic and when it appears as a dislocation. Moreover, the ban on Contrastive LD in German questions is also accounted for, demonstrating the restrictive power of the system. Chapter 6 summarises the dissertation.

3. Findings: main theses

1. Concerning the cross-linguistic differences in syntactic topicalisation, the complexity of topical expressions is reflected by the complexity of the relevant feature bundles. It is an obvious claim that not just the syntactic topicalisation construction can highlight a topic but there are other means of doing so, and, on the other hand, non-prominent topics also exist that do not require any kind of syntactic marking. Thus, weak, non-contrastive topics are assumed to be universally associated with the ‘*aboutness*’ feature ([about]), whereas more prominent, contrastive topics will be marked as [about] and [contrast]. The syntactic effects of these features will depend on the language-particular constraint hierarchies.
2. Supported by studies in the field of pragmatics, I claim that LD is a device to handle new topics. On the basis of Lambrecht (1994), Left Dislocation is claimed to be caused by a pragmatic requirement which disallows new topics, i.e. the introduction of an item should follow before marking it as topic. Formally, the pragmatic features of a nominal feature bundle which results in LD are [new] and [about], which may be accompanied by the contrastive feature.

3. The two major types of LD, i.e. Hanging Topic Left Dislocation and Contrastive Left Dislocation, which are syntactically clearly definable in German, seem to exist in English and Hungarian as well.
4. In LD, the resumptive appears in the structure as the spell-out of grammatical-functional and discourse features. It does not involve the insertion of new, non-input material. Moreover, the input for a LD structure is in no way different from an input where another type of discourse or operator-based displacement takes place.
5. Concerning the position of the resumptive pronoun, it is argued that it can occupy the syntactic topic position (this is always the case in Hungarian and is true for German resumptives if they carry the contrast feature as well); in English, because of the displacement of the relevant features (aboutness and contrast), the resumptive remains in argument position in all types of LD expressions
6. The differences in the form of the resumptive are argued to be based on two factors: (i) the presence of the [contrast] feature on the bundle containing the argument CU forces a demonstrative interpretation, i.e. in cases when the resumptive pronoun is fronted, it will be most likely to be spelt out with a demonstrative form; (ii) case matching between the resumptive and the fronted lexical item is connected to the language-specific distance of case assignment: in English, only immediate adjacency to the argument CU results in case matching, whereas the [arg] feature has a greater scope in German and Hungarian, in which case matching with fronted resumptive pronouns is attested.
7. The set of constraints responsible for the assessment of basic word order, topicalisation and LD, complemented by a set of constraints referring to the wh-feature, is shown to be able to account for another type of LD triggered by a syntactic requirement, i.e. the amelioration of an island violation in wh-questions. There, a set of constraints different from the pragmatic principle referred to in point 2 produces the same splitting effect.
8. It has been successfully accounted for that wh-marked items will not be left dislocated in the analysed languages, and, furthermore, LD will not be assessed more optimal than syntactic topicalisation if the input only contains the [contrast][about] feature combination.
9. Dealing with the two fronting operations, namely syntactic topicalisation and wh-fronting, I employed two types of precedence constraints referring to CU—domain, which are able to

derive single and multiple wh-fronting alike. In a case when the target feature, e.g. [wh] has to precede the host, i.e. the interrogative domain, then the fronting mechanism will apply to all features of the relevant kind. Another option is to look at the situation from the perspective of the host domain: in case of an interrogative predicate, its domain has to be preceded by a [wh] feature, or in other words, it has to follow a [wh] feature. Here, the requirement is satisfied if the domain is preceded by one relevant feature, regardless of the fact how many such features are present. Thus, the formulation of the constraints is parallel to the two types of contrast-precedence, which adds desirable symmetry to the system.

As a concluding remark, it has to be admitted that the present system is still in the making; in that respect, it cannot compete with the vast body of generative literature. Nevertheless, if it can prove to be powerful enough to handle the presented issues, like topicalisation, LD and wh-movement, and their combinations, then these investigations can be said to have been successful.

4. References

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